

commentletters

From: John Loades <pollyjohn52@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 24, 2016 4:02 PM
To: commentletters
Cc: John Loades
Subject: 3/1/2016 Item #7 Division of Water Rights- Update and Readopt- Drought Related
Emergency Regulations Russian River Tributaries



February 24, 2016

State Water Resources Board

RE: Update and Readopt - a Drought-Related Emergency Regulation Requiring Additional Water User Information for the Protection of Specific Fisheries in Tributaries to the Russian River

We take umbrage with the staff of the State Water Resources Control Board's proposal to not readopt the "...enhanced water component of the emergency regulation due to improved hydrologic conditions resulting from increased precipitation so far this year, (October 1, 2015 - September 30, 2016.)"

According to AccuWeather, source for the "Press Democrat" rainfall statistics and wunderground for, "The San Francisco Chronicle" precipitation information, just about all of California has had less rainfall than last year to date. We have also experience less rainfall this season to date. The readings from our rain gauge located in the Dutch Bill Watershed allows us to concur.

The State Water Resources Board and the Department of Fish and Wildlife spent thousands of dollars and probably just as many hours attempting to convince the people populating these four areas to provide the requested information and conserve water.

We attended four of the five meetings regarding the emergency regulations. We heard angry voices protesting the collection of information concerning their water usage and wells. We did not hear people complain about conserving water. We did hear people venting their frustration and outrage at the thought that they were wasting or not conserving water.

It was explained by numerous representatives from various agencies at each of the meetings that the purpose of these measures was to protect, enhance and manage habitat for the Coho. We were bombarded with facts, figures, and pictures demonstrating what a deplorable state the Salmon had and still do have while trying to survive due to the four year drought, not mismanagement and water diversion.

Frost protection and irrigation methods were briefly mentioned and only discussed when a member of the audience asked questions or made statements of concern about how much the watershed was and is continually stressed by those procedures.

Now after a few rain storms in the last five months, the Water Resources Control Board has the audacity to entertain the thought of eliminating enhanced conservation measures. Yet it wants to re-adopt the use of information, "... in order to prepare for ongoing drought, should recent improvements in flow conditions in the tributaries not continue, or for future dry conditions."

Our Reaction: CONFUSION! ***Information but not Enhanced Conservation???*** *We were coerced into providing information that we can't say is totally accurate. But, we gladly have and will continue to practice self-imposed water conservation.*

Message Received: *The Board cares more about gathering information about our wells and water usage than it does about the Coho. If it really was concerned about the fish and other wildlife species, and wanted to aid the Department of Fish and Wildlife manage habitat responsibly, it would monitor all water users and diversions. It would quit wasting time and funds, to correlate unscientific data and explore, create and implement water use restrictions for irrigation, diversion and frost protection. Why after only five months, is staff assuming the "four year on-going drought" is over. Is it because frost protection will begin soon?*

The information the citizens in the four critical watersheds provided is by no means accurate. Too many people reporting cause too many variables. The board needs to see and share proof that there is improved "...flow conditions allowing more groundwater seepage to contribute to stream flow" and success has been reached and that there is a "trickle of water maintaining surface connection(s) between pools." (see page 9 - Russian River Tributaries Emergency Regulation Meeting , July 6-9, 2015 Slide Presentation) before it decides to kill enhanced water conservation measures.

All of California, including the four critical watersheds must continue to conserve water. The drought may continue to be "on-going" as was stated in the need for information justification or it might reach catastrophic proportions in the following year. We must protect every single of moisture.

Sincerely,

Pauline and John Loades

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Dutch Bill Creek Watershed